

THE CARPENTER'S SON AND HIS RELATIONS

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"
Matthew 13:55-56

WHEN our Saviour was upon this earth, there were some persons who, having had their eyes divinely opened, could see His true beauty, and who admired His every action, and said, "He hath done all things well." But there were others, whose eyes were blinded by sin, and malice, and prejudice, who could see nothing good in Him at all. Because He ate and drank as other men did, they said, "Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber." They said that His zeal was only pretence or else madness, and when He cast out evil spirits by His almighty power, they said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils."

There were some who wondered at His wisdom and His mighty works, and who did not know whether to consider Him a prophet of God or a Divine Being, but there were others who could only see the carpenter's human son, whose mother's name was Mary, and whose brethren and sisters were all well known, ordinary people. The language of the text is the language of many who are living today, for while others see in Christ everything to admire, these cavilers see no beauty in Him, and just put Him on a level with others with whom they are acquainted.

It seems to me that we have here *two views of Christ's person*, the estimation of prejudice and the estimation of piety, and *two views of Christ's relations*, in which we also have the estimation of prejudice and the estimation of piety.

I. First, we will consider THE TWO VIEWS OF CHRIST'S PERSON, the view of prejudice and the view of piety.

Prejudice could not dispute the fact of Christ's wisdom and mighty works, so it sought to disparage Him by saying, "After all, He is only a carpenter's son, just the son of an ordinary artisan. Shall a prophet rise up from among the chips in the carpenter's shop? Shall we sit at the feet of the man who is simply a toiler at the carpenter's bench?" Prejudice may seem very wise in its own esteem, but *it is really very foolish*. To be prejudiced against a truth because of the lowly origin of him who proclaims it is most manifest folly. Is a pearl to be rejected because it was found in a shell that is itself of no value? Would not a wise man pick up a diamond from a dunghill if he saw one flashing there?

Even if the occupation of a carpenter had been a degrading one, which it certainly was not, yet, if his son has something to say that is worth hearing, is he not a fool who will not listen to it because it is uttered by the carpenter's son? If from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth, a stream of divine wisdom was poured forth, is it not most egregious folly to refuse to receive it because He was reputed to be the son of Joseph the carpenter? If He speaks as no other man ever spoke, if His doctrine is more sublime than that of any other teacher, if the morality which He inculcates is more pure and more heavenly than that of any other leader of men, what matters it that He is the carpenter's son?

*"He whom man with scorn refuses,
Whom the favor'd nation hates,*

*He it is JEHOVAH chooses,
Him the highest place awaits;
Kings and princes
Shall do homage at His gates."*

But while prejudice is thus very foolish, *it is also very frequent*. There are many persons who put an extinguisher on the candle, and then try to light it. For instance, in listening to a certain preacher, they make up their mind that he cannot say anything that can be beneficial to them, and then they wonder that they are not edified, it would be a wonder if they were. Those who hear the Word only to cavil at it will probably be left to cavil to their life's end, for while the Spirit of God explains difficulties to the sincere seeker after truth, those difficulties which men themselves make often lead them to make more and more so that they continually plunge deeper and yet deeper in the mire.

But what a dreadful thing it is that prejudice makes men even object to the Gospel of Christ! They say that it is so simple, so commonplace that it will not do for them. I have heard some, who ought to know better, say, when they have heard the simple Gospel preached, "Oh, yes! 'Believe and live' is a very proper message to the multitude, but something more profound than that is needed for thinking men," meaning themselves, as if they were the only thoughtful people in the world. Well, sirs, if you are prejudiced against the Gospel because of its simplicity, may God disarm that prejudice, and bring you to see that it is its simplicity which is its glory, and which makes it the means of rescuing sinners from the ruin into which their guilt has sunk them.

Prejudice against Christ is also exceedingly sinful. If it really is true that He is the Son of God, it is very shameful that He should not have a hearing because He stooped as low as to become "the carpenter's son." If the magnificence of His benevolence led Him to empty Himself, and to become despised and rejected of men, shall the splendor of His love close my ears to the message of salvation that He sends to me? That He who was one with His Father in glory should condescend to lie as a babe in Bethlehem's manger, and to go about among men as the reputed son of the carpenter of Nazareth, is cause for reverence, for admiration, for love, for gratitude, yet some for this very reason are prejudiced against Him.

If the Gospel had been suitable only to philosophers and men of learning, what a vast majority of mankind would have been left without any hope of salvation! Shall that almighty grace which has made it a Gospel suitable to all classes and conditions of men become a reason why prejudice shall turn its back upon it? Surely it is better to be saved by "the carpenter's son" than to be lost, better to enter heaven through Him who was "despised and rejected of men" than to be shut up in hell through not believing in Him, better to receive a crown of life from the hand of Him who was crucified on Calvary than to receive the sentence of condemnation from the mouth of the Judge when He sitteth upon the great white throne in all the glory of His Father and of His holy angels.

If any of you, dear friends, have a prejudice against any form of Scriptural truth, I pray you to shake it off. We are all apt to be prejudiced in one way or another, and it needs great grace to keep us clear of the evil, so let us be down our guard against it. Give the Gospel a fair consideration, and very specially and impartially weigh in the scales of sound judgment the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Sit down at the foot of the cross, and study the wounds of Jesus, and do not pour contempt and scorn upon Him until you have found good reason to do so, and that I am sure you never will do. Shake off all prejudice, again I entreat you, for it is a deadly disease, which may prove eternally fatal to you.

Now let us turn away from prejudice, and see what piety thinks concerning Christ. As piety asks, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" *she admires His condescension.* Piety is not ashamed of Jesus of Nazareth even though she supposes that He worked in the carpenter's shop. On the contrary, she is full of admiration for the Son of God who stooped so low as to be known as the son of Joseph, and who, in that capacity, was obedient to His earthly parents, and assisted in the manual labor in which the carpenter engaged. Piety does not think any the less of the Savior because He wore the garb of a working man, but

she considers it to be to His honor that He laid aside His honor, and she regards Him as having more glory when He laid aside His glory than when He wore it. I long to see my Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, but I think I would almost as gladly have seen Him in the carpenter's shop. I delight in the thought that I shall see Him on the throne, but I sometimes wish that I could have seen Him on the cross, for it was there that His love reached its climax as He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Piety is all the more pleased with Christ because, when He condescended to be a man, *He joined the working classes*. There are and always will be, and very properly so, different social grades among men, but the difference between a carpenter and a gentleman is, to my mind, so slight that I cannot perceive it.

We are all very much alike when we are sitting in the house of God, and when we are lying upon the bed of sickness, and especially when we are sleeping in the silent tomb, yet if our Savior had come to this earth as one of the upper classes of society, I can fancy my lords and ladies saying, "Oh, yes! we have much fellowship with the King of the Jews as we think how He rode through Jerusalem in His gorgeous chariot of state attended by such a brilliant retinue," but I can imagine how working men might then have said, "He has little or nothing in common with us, He does not know what it is to earn His daily bread by hard manual labor."

But "the carpenter's son" says, "Oh, yes! I do know that, and I understand your ways, and I am more familiar with poverty than many of you are. Most if not all of you have a home to go to when your day's work is done, but I had not where to lay my head, so you are better off than I was."

Jesus of Nazareth can fully sympathize with the poorest of the poor, yet at the same time He is higher than the highest in the land, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Those who have the greatest intellectual power may well sit at His feet, for He is wisdom incarnate, and the feeblest and poorest may draw nigh to Him even as they did when He was upon the earth. We who toil mentally and you who toil physically may rejoice that Christ also was a toiler.

When I see a notice about sermons to working men, I think to myself, "Well, whoever else is or is not a working man, I know that I am one, and that I work very hard." It is quite a mistake to suppose that those of us who do not carry burdens on our backs, or follow the plough, or wield an axe do not therefore work. The most wearing kind of work is that which has to do with the brain and the mind, so I claim the Savior as having fellowship with me, and you workers who love His name love Him all the better because He also was a worker. He was no lazy lie-abed, He was not one who slept or dawdled away His time, He toiled at the carpenter's bench, and afterwards He said of His life's service, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day," "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Piety is grateful to Christ for being "the carpenter's son" because she recollects that *He is the type of the kingdom which He governs*. When the carnal eye looks at Christ, it sees only a carpenter, but the spiritual eye can see "the King in his beauty" in the garb of a working man. He who saws the wood and guides the plane and drives the nails is the great Creator, without whom was not anything made that was made. What was true of Christ is in a measure true of His church and of His Gospel too.

The church of Christ often appears to be merely a company of obscure and insignificant folk, yet that church is "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and that Gospel which is often despised because of its simplicity is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The outward show of the spiritual kingdom is very little even as it was when Christ was known as the son of a carpenter, yet all the while He was the Son of God from heaven. I do not know if I can get this truth into the mind of every Christian here, but I should like to do so.

The outward form of the Christian church and the mere letter of Gospel doctrine may appear to be poor and mean, just so, it is the carpenter's church and the carpenter's Gospel, but "the carpenter's son" was the Son of God, and as He is in His church we may say of it, "JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH," "the LORD is there," and the preaching of the Gospel is no mere repetition of the dull, dead letter, but it is God marching forth in majesty proclaiming mercy to every sinner who believes in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Be you content to remain unknown, Christian, this is the carpenter's kingdom, the kingdom of the King in His glory is yet to be revealed.

*"It doth not yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head."*

"Is not this the carpenter's son?" Ay, it is, but there is a divine splendor concealed beneath that lowly form. Some of the early fathers and old writers used to delight in expressing strange ideas concerning "the carpenter's son." Julian the apostate, as he is called, once asked a certain Christian, "What do you think the carpenter's son is doing now?" "Making coffins for you and for all His enemies," was the prompt reply. If that is not literally what He is doing, we may depend upon it that it will go ill with those who say of Him, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," for we remember the solemn conclusion of the parable of the pounds, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

One old writer says, "Christ was a carpenter, and a rare carpenter too, for He made a ladder that reaches all the way from earth to heaven, and up that ladder souls are continually ascending to the palace which He has gone to prepare for them." That is a quaint way of describing how Christ has bridged the gulf between guilty sinners and their offended God by His atoning sacrifice. Happy are they who not only admire the ladder, but who trust themselves upon it, and so are brought safely home to God in glory.

II. Now, in the second place, we are to consider THE TWO VIEWS OF CHRIST'S RELATIONS, and again we shall speak of the view of prejudice and the view of piety.

These men were not content with asking questions about Christ Himself, but they also made inquiries concerning His relations. They said, "Is not his mother called Mary?" She was a very excellent woman who was highly honored in being the mother of Jesus, but there seems to be something of disdain or contempt in the question "Is not his mother called Mary?"

Then there were His brethren—very commonplace sort of folk, the questioner seemed to imply. "Why!" said one, "I know all of them, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, but who are they?" "Well," said another, "I know His sisters, and there is nothing remarkable about them, so there probably is nothing special about Him. Look at His relations, what are they but just a carpenter's wife and family? It is true that they belong to the tribe of Judah, and that they are of the house and lineage of David, but they are not the kind of people to be invited into the upper circles of society, so there is no reason why we should take any notice of the carpenter's son."

Now, that type of prejudice still exists in the world, we do not hear much said nowadays against Christ's natural relations, but it is His spiritual relations who now come under the ban of prejudice. "Yes," men say, "this evangelical doctrine certainly has a very singular power to attract the multitude. In the hands of Luther, it worked a very remarkable Reformation. It is true that the preaching and writings of Calvin carried this Gospel into the hearts of vast numbers of hearers and readers, and we see the power it had over great masses of men as it was presented to them by Bunyan, and Wesley, and Whitefield and other popular preachers, yet after all, what is the type of people that is attracted by such preaching as this? Prejudice does not stop to answer its own question, it hardly likes to say what it thinks, but what it thinks is something like this.

It thinks, in the first place, that *they are a set of very poor people*, and prejudice considers that to be one of the worst things you can say of them. In the estimation of those who are prejudiced in this fashion, poverty is regarded as almost worse than crime. A man may be guilty of nearly every form of iniquity, but so long as he is rich, nothing is said against him, yet if another possesses every virtue, but in addition to that is poor, prejudice has not a word to say in his favor. We need not be greatly concerned at this, for we remember that our blessed Master said concerning His own ministry, "the poor have the

Gospel preached to them." If He was glad to have them in His congregation, we also may rejoice if the poor are found amongst our hearers and amongst those who are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Prejudice further says, "Well, if these relations of Christ are not all poor, *some of them have had very little education.*" This is a remark which I often hear or read, but I certainly have failed to discover any wonderfully superior education in many of those gentlemen who seem to take delight in denying many of the verities of the faith. I often think that, if they had been better educated, they would not talk so foolishly as they sometimes do when they sneeringly ask, "What do those uneducated preachers know?"

Well, we might seem to be fools in glorying if we replied that, if we did not know more than they do of the vital truths of Christianity, we would go to school again, and begin to learn the A B C of theology. As for the great thinkers of whom they so continually prate, we remember that Paul wrote, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise....that no flesh should glory in his presence."

When these prejudiced people have had our answer upon this point, they say that these relations of Christ, meaning thereby those who profess to be His followers, *are very much like other people who make no profession of religion.* One says, "I know a member of a certain church who has a very bad temper." Someone else adds, "I know another who does not pay his bills." Well, even if this is true, is it surprising that there are hypocrites in the church when there was a Judas even among the apostles? "But," says another, "they are all alike, they are all a set of hypocrites." Yet the most prejudiced slanderer knows that he is telling a lie when he talks thus.

If he would but speak the truth, he would be compelled to admit that the Gospel we preach has made harlots chaste, drunkards sober, and thieves honest, and that it is our great aim to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." He knows all this, but it suits his purpose to shut his eyes to it, and only to see, here and there, the imperfection that is incidental to manhood, or the hypocrisy which no foresight can prevent, and which only shows that hypocrites will thrust themselves into any place however holy, except heaven itself, and they would enter even there if they could.

This will suffice as to the view of prejudice concerning Christ's relations, so now let us turn to the view of piety concerning them. Piety says, in the first place, "*Blessed be the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that He should have a mother, and brethren, and sisters here below.*" That ever the Son of God should have condescended to have brethren among the sons of men, and that there now sitteth upon the throne of God one of a human mother born, is a subject for unceasing joy. My soul seems to expand as I think of it.

How wondrously our poor humanity is exalted. Angels were never so closely linked with deity as manhood is now. Christ has no mother among the seraphim, no brother among the cherubim, and no sister in all the shining ranks of holy angels, but looking round upon those whom He has redeemed with His precious blood, He says, "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whomever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

In the next place, instead of finding fault with Christ because of the imperfections of His relations, *piety sees in their imperfections a further reason for blessing Christ.* She says, "What! O gracious Savior, are thy relations sinners? Have they imperfections and do they make mistakes? Then, all hail, blessed Savior, that thou art not only related to humanity, but to sinful humanity, and though thou art thyself sinless, yet thou callest sinners thy friends, and thou art called the Friend of sinners because thou receivest them and eatest with them!" Yes, in the sense in which Christ Himself spoke of them, His mother and brethren and sisters are still with us, and though they are not all that they ought to be, we love Him all the more because He condescends to permit such people to be in close relationship to Himself.

Piety also says that *she wishes she was quite sure that her own relationship to Christ was as close as this.* "Oh!" saith the humble and sincere soul, "if I might be but the meanest amongst those whom Christ calls His brethren and sisters, I would sooner have that honor than be the wearer of an earthly coronet or crown or possess the greatest wealth of gold or diamonds." When piety is assured of her own personal

relationship to Christ, instead of being ashamed of Him because of His poor brethren and sisters, she counts it a priceless privilege to be numbered amongst them.

Have you ever read the inscriptions that have been found in the catacombs of Rome? If you have done so, you must have noticed that many of them were evidently the productions of persons who were quite illiterate. Probably many of them were not able to write at all, so they obtained the services of others, who were little more educated than they were themselves, to write their epitaphs.

Many of these first followers of Christ were certainly very ignorant so far as human learning was concerned, but do you now feel ashamed to belong to the same sect to which they belonged? Oh, no! if you really love the Lord whom they loved, you feel that it is an honor to be a member of that blessed Christian brotherhood, in which many of the members cheerfully laid down their lives rather than give up their connection with Christ their Savior.

Some people seem never to tire of railing at our particular denomination. "Oh, Baptists," they say, "who are they?" But shall I be ashamed to be called a Baptist because some who ought to know better try to pour contempt and scorn upon the name? Oh, no! but the more they are despised, the more closely will I cling to them. When our Lord Jesus Christ asked John the Baptist to baptize Him, He said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," and with such an eminent example before me, I cannot be wrong if I seek very literally to "follow His steps" whatever obloquy that may involve. A man is not worthy to be connected with a Christian denomination if he is not prepared to take upon himself the reproach of the body to which he belongs, so let none of us be ashamed of being Baptists, and let none of us be ashamed of Jesus, and though His brethren and sisters may be poor and ignorant, let us love and esteem them because of their relationship to Him.

Piety also rejoices that Christ's brethren and sisters are here on earth, and that they are poor, for she says, "*I can minister to Christ by helping them.*" Piety feels concerning the brethren and sisters of Christ as David felt when He said, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" He was kind to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake, let us be kind to Christ's brethren and sisters for His sake. Let us ask, "Where can we find any of the household of Jesus that we may show them kindness for His sake!" Christian charity delights to find out the poor believer, and to minister to him for Christ's sake. If our names are found enrolled amongst the brethren and sisters of Christ, we shall surely count it an honor and privilege to do all that we can for the rest of the family, especially for those who are in the greatest need.

Now I close with just two questions. First, dear friends, *what is your view of Christ*, is it the view of prejudice or the view of piety? Do you say that, however lightly Christ may be esteemed by the world, He is precious to you? Then I trust that you also are amongst the brethren and sisters of "the carpenter's son" whom He will acknowledge when He comes in His glory. Those who follow the despised Christ will not be rejected by the reigning Christ.

The other question is, *what is your view of Christ's people*, is it the view of prejudice or the view of piety? Are you willing to cast in your lot with them? Will you join the sect that is everywhere spoken against? Are you ready to be hooted and jeered at for Christ's sake? If you are, I trust that you are amongst His brethren and sisters who suffer with Him here, and who shall reign with Him by and by. "Who is on the LORD'S side?"

Let that question ring in your ears as you go your way, "Who is on the LORD'S side?" If God be your God, serve Him. If Christ be your king, follow Him. Unite yourself with His people, and let all men see that you are not ashamed to own your Lord or those who are His brethren and sisters today. Let not your view of Christ and His relations be the view of prejudice, but let it be the view of piety; and may God bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 13:24-58

Verse 24. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

Jesus never sowed any other kind of seed. The truth which He taught is pure and unadulterated. It is good seed—good and only good, the very best of seed.

25. *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

Wherever Christ is active, the enemy is sure to be active too. If you have a sleeping church, you may have a sleeping devil, but as soon as ever Christ is in the congregation, sowing the good seed, the devil wakes up, and by night, when men are off their guard, the bad seed—the mock wheat—here translated “tares”—is sown among the true wheat.

26. *But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

The false wheat came up with the true. Perhaps the seed in the one case may have looked like the other, even as there is “another gospel which is not another” with which some still trouble us. The only true test is, “By their fruits ye shall know them,” so, when the seeds had sprung up, there was the blade of true wheat, and “then appeared the tares also.”

27. *So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*

How often we have asked that question! We have seen children trained by the most godly parents, yet they have developed a sad propensity to sin, and we have said, “From whence then have these tares come?” We have seen a ministry which has been sound and faithful, and yet in the congregation there have sprung up divers errors which have done a world of mischief, and we have had sorrowfully to ask, “From whence then have these tares come?”

28-29. *He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*

We are so fallible, we make so many mistakes, that we cannot be trusted to do this uprooting, for we might pull up wheat as well as tares. If there had been briars or thorns growing in that field, those servants might have pulled them up without damage to the corn, just as an open evil liver, who breaks the laws of God openly, may be cut off from the church without damage, but these tares must be left for the present.

30. *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

There will be an end of this mixture in due time, the hypocrite shall not always stand in the congregation of the righteous, the wheat and the tares shall be separated “in the time of harvest.”

31-32. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

The kingdom of heaven is just like that in this world, wherever it comes, it comes to grow. And it is just like that in our hearts. Oh, how small is the first sign of grace in the soul! Perhaps it is only a single thought. The life divine may begin with but a wish, or with one painful conviction of error, but if it be the true and living seed of God, it will grow. And there is no telling how great will be its growth till, in that soul where all was darkness, many graces, like sweet song-birds, shall come and sing, and make joy and gladness there. Oh, that you and I might experientially know the meaning of the parable of the mustard seed!

33. *Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

And although leaven is usually the symbol of evil, yet it may be here a fair representation of the kingdom of heaven itself, for it operates mysteriously and secretly, yet powerfully, till it permeates the

whole of man's nature, and the Gospel will keep on winning its way till the whole world shall yet be leavened by it.

*“More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail.”*

34-36. *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*

I again remind you that, wherever there is anything that you do not understand, the best way is to consult the Master concerning it. If I read a book in which there is an obscure passage, and I can write to the author, and ask him what he means by it, I shall most probably get to understand it. So, the best Expositor of the Word of God is the Spirit of God, therefore appeal to Him whenever you are puzzled with anything that is taught in the Scriptures, and say to Him, “Blessed Spirit, wilt thou graciously expound to me this parable, this doctrine, this experience?” and He will do it, and so you shall become wise unto salvation.

37-43. *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

May God give us such ears as can hear His voice, and may we take to heart the solemn teachings of our Lord!

44-46. *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

It would be a good bargain for anyone to part with all he has in exchange for the kingdom of heaven, yet that great “treasure” is to be had for nothing by everyone who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ.

47-50. *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

We are to cast the great seine-net of the Gospel into the sea of humanity, but we must not expect that all we catch will prove to be good. There is time of separation coming when “the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.”

51. *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?* [See sermon #3305, A Clear Understanding].

This is a question which constantly needs to be put to all hearers and readers of the Word. “Have ye understood all these things?” To be hearers only, or readers only, will avail nothing, the Word must be understood, accepted, assimilated, and so shall it make us wise unto salvation.

51. *They say unto him, Yea, Lord.*

They answered very glibly, yet probably not one of them fully understood the seven parables in this chapter. If anyone did so, he would be like the instructed scribe described in the next verse:—

52. *Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

He who has learned anything concerning the kingdom of heaven should teach it to others, bringing forth the truth in pleasing variety, “new and old,” to edify all his hearers.

53-54. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?*

They were highly privileged in having Jesus back in their midst, yet they failed to appreciate His teaching, they were astonished at His wisdom, but were unable to perceive the divine source from which it sprang.

55-58. *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

This was a notable illustration of John's words concerning Christ, “He came unto his own, but his own received him not.” Let us beware of unbelief lest it should tie the hands of Christ as it did there in his own country.

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